

§ 2700.11

motion may be ruled upon prior to the expiration of the time for response; a party adversely affected by the ruling may seek reconsideration.

[58 FR 12164, Mar. 3, 1993, as amended at 64 FR 48713, Sept. 8, 1999]

§ 2700.11 Withdrawal of pleading.

A party may withdraw a pleading at any stage of a proceeding with the approval of the Judge or the Commission.

§ 2700.12 Consolidation of proceedings.

The Commission and its Judges may at any time, upon their own motion or a party's motion, order the consolidation of proceedings that involve similar issues.

Subpart B—Contests of Citations and Orders

§ 2700.20 Notice of contest of a citation or order issued under section 104 of the Act.

(a) *Who may contest.* (1) An operator may contest:

(i) A citation or an order issued under section 104 of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 814;

(ii) A modification of a citation or an order issued under section 104 of the Act; and

(iii) The reasonableness of the length of time fixed for abatement in a citation or modification thereof issued under section 104 of the Act.

(2) A miner or representative of miners may contest:

(i) The issuance, modification or termination of any order issued under section 104 of the Act; and

(ii) The reasonableness of the length of time fixed for abatement in a citation or modification thereof issued under section 104 of the Act.

(b) *Time to contest.* Contests filed by an operator pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section shall be filed with the Secretary at the appropriate Regional Solicitor's Office or at the Solicitor's Office, Mine Safety and Health Division, Arlington, Virginia, within 30 days of receipt by the operator of the contested citation, order, or modification. Contests filed by a miner or representative of miners pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) of this section shall be

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filed in the same manner within 30 days of receipt by the miner or representative of miners of the contested order, modification, or termination.

(c) *Notification by the Secretary.* The Secretary, in accordance with section 105(d) of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 815(d), shall immediately advise the Commission of such notice of contest upon its receipt.

(d) *Copy to Commission.* The contesting party shall also file a copy of his notice of contest with the Commission at the time he files with the Secretary.

(e) *Contents of notice of contest.* (1) A notice of contest shall contain a short and plain statement of:

(i) The party's position with respect to each issue of law and fact that the party contends is pertinent; and

(ii) The relief requested by the party.

(2) A legible copy of the contested citation or order shall be attached to the notice of contest. If a legible copy is not available, the notice of contest shall set forth the text of the contested citation or order.

(f) *Answer.* Within 20 days after service of a notice of contest, the Secretary shall file an answer responding to each allegation of the notice of contest.

§ 2700.21 Effect of failure to file notice of contest of citation.

An operator's failure to file a notice of contest of a citation or order issued under section 104 of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 814, shall not preclude the operator from challenging, in a penalty proceeding, the fact of violation or any special findings contained in a citation or order including the assertion in the citation or order that the violation was of a significant and substantial nature or was caused by the operator's unwarrantable failure to comply with the standard.

§ 2700.22 Notice of contest of imminent danger withdrawal orders under section 107 of the Act.

(a) *Time to file.* A notice of contest of a withdrawal order issued under section 107 of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 817, or any modification or termination of the order, shall be filed with the Commission by the contesting party within 30 days of receipt of the order or any